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Bertram Lutley Sclater and Bertram’s Weaver *Ploceus bertrandi*

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Received 22 August 2002

Shelley (1893: 23–24) named a new weaver from Nyasaland (now Malawi) *Hyphantornis bertrandi* after “Bertram Lutley Sclater”. The following year he named a race of bush-shrike after him, *Laniarius bertrandi* (Shelley 1894: 15), now *Malaconotus olivaceus bertrandi*, again with the same spelling in each case. Sclater’s brother William Lutley Sclater (1930) used the English name “Bertram’s Weaver”.

Until recently all authors of regional avifaunas have assumed that this was no error by Shelley, and that he did intend to latinize the name Bertram as Bertrandus, in what is currently known as *Ploceus bertrandi* (e.g. Benson *et al.* 1971, Mackworth-

Praed & Grant 1963). However, both Wynne (1969) and Jobling (1991) gave his name as Bertrand L. Sclater, and Sibley & Monroe (1990) gave *P. bertrandi* the English name of Bertrand's Weaver.

In order to decide if this change to the English name was justified, enquiries were made of Wellington College, Berkshire, where B.L. Sclater was educated. Bertram Lutley Sclater (1866-1897), son of Philip Lutley Sclater, was a pupil at Wellington College 1880-1883. In 1883 he joined the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and in 1885 became a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. From 1891-1893 he served in Nyasaland and in 1894 was attached to the Intelligence Department, being promoted to Captain in 1895. He did not himself collect the birds named in his honour (they were obtained by Alexander Whyte), but Shelley and his father Philip Lutley Sclater (Shelley 1893: 2, 24) mentioned that he was "Mr. Johnston's principal officer in Nyassaland, and Commander of his police force" (i.e. right-hand man to the Commissioner, the future Sir Harry Johnston). He died in Zanzibar on 25 July 1897 (Rangeley 1958) while engaged in building the Uganda Railway.

So, the correct substantive name of *Ploceus (Hyphantornis) bertrandi* is Bertram's Weaver. We can only assume that Shelley thought "bertrami" too ugly and coined the Latin equivalent *bertrandi*. We are not aware of this name being used specifically for any other bird (or mammal), but note that Riley (1931: 279) had no compunction in naming as *bertrami* a new form of the butterfly *Charaxes varanes* from Oman.

Acknowledgements

For biographical information on Bertram Lutley Sclater we thank John Edwards, Secretary to the Old Wellingtonians Society.

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